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OCTOBER

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PART 215.

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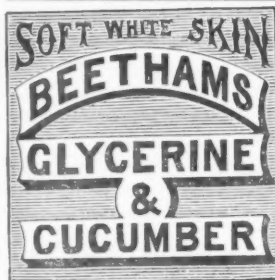


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food, but bolt it like a serpent. Follow any exciting or unhealthy business, if money can be made at it, so that your friends may console themselves for your early death. Never go to bed before midnight, and then with a full stomach. Eat little niceties, such as pastries, unripe fruit, lunch, wine, &c., between meals. Be always in a passion, either of anger or love.

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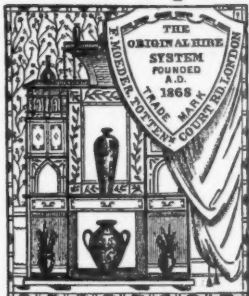
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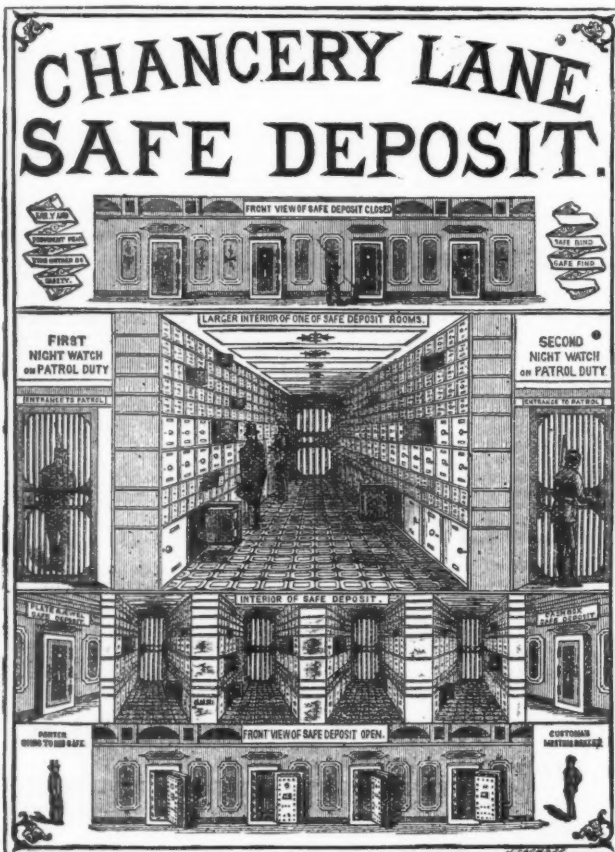
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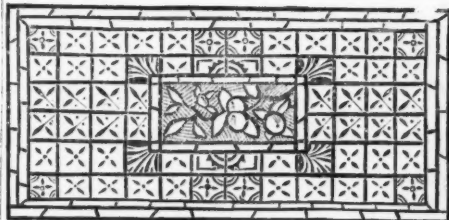
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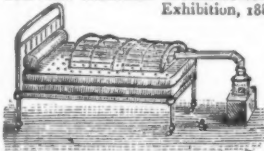
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SATURDAY, OCTOBER 9, 1886.

PRICE TWOPENCE.

A DATELESS BARGAIN.

By C. L. PIRKIS,

Author of "Lady Lovelace," etc.

CHAPTER XVIII.

EVERYONE decided that Mrs. Shenstone's reception, on the eve of Joyce's wedding, was more brilliant than any to which they had before been summoned by that lady. It had been planned on a more ambitious scale, and had had more time, thought, and energy bestowed upon it.

Mrs. Shenstone, in the most elaborate of blush-rose tinted robes that a Parisian modiste could contrive, surveyed herself in succession in four full-length mirrors, and came to the conclusion that everyone's first exclamation on entering her drawing-room would be "dear me, she looks young enough to be the bride herself."

Joyce acted as maid to Mab, and helped to attire her in a dress as dead white as her own. Then she arranged her thick brown hair so as to shadow her anxious, thoughtful face, and so crowned and bedecked her with jewels that people saw in the girl a dignity and beauty they had never before noted.

As for Joyce herself, she decided that for that night, at least, she would be radiant; and radiant she was.

"To-morrow," she confided to Uncle Archie, "Frank and I will creep into church silently and demurely to the sound of muffled drums, but to-night, at any rate, the drums shall not be muffled."

Uncle Archie muttered something to the effect that, in his young days, weddings and funerals alike were conducted decorously and without ostentation. "People didn't make such fools of themselves then as they do now," he grumbled.

Sylvia comported herself with a good deal of unobtrusive tact that evening. She put on dark colours, and placed herself at Mrs. Shenstone's elbow as that lady received her arriving guests.

"You look as though you needed a chaperon, Tiny," she whispered insinuatingly into her ear.

And Tiny was instantly mollified, and all Sylvia's misdeeds were pardoned on the spot.

Frank felt himself to be on the very pinnacle of happiness that night. "It's more than I deserve, a hundred thousand times more," he soliloquised over and over again, thanking Heaven that he had had the common-sense to make his pride give place to his happiness. It made him giddy to think of the years of bliss of which he seemed at the moment able to command a bird's-eye view.

He stood a little way apart from Joyce, watching her in her bright beauty so prettily humouring old Uncle Archie, so protective to Mab, so forbearing to all her mother's follies and affectations.

"It's worth living on prison diet all one's days to get such a night as this," he thought, "and to think that my whole life will be a succession of such nights, or rather of something infinitely better!"

Then somehow he felt his eyes were wet. He threw himself with energy into the stream of guests, found occupation by volunteering to bring ices to some elderly dowagers, who, ensconced in a quiet corner, did not feel equal to daring the crowded staircase to procure them for themselves.

The refreshment buffet was in the dining-room. As Frank entered only two persons were in the room, a maid who had come in for a gossip, and the man who was serving the ices. The former fluttered away at Frank's approach, the latter, an elderly,

serious-looking man, to all appearance of the respectable butler class, held up a warning finger and whispered :

"Not a word, sir, if you please. I knew you would recognise me, so I've been waiting here to have a word with you on the quiet."

Then Frank to his amazement recognised in the serious-looking butler a detective, a man of a superior and thoroughly confidential stamp, with whom of late he had had dealings in connection with some intricate law business.

"Morton!" he cried indignantly, "what in the name of fortune are you doing here? I've a great mind to——"

"Not a word, sir," said the man again. "I've had my orders from Scotland Yard. There's a lot been going on here that you know nothing at all about. All sorts of dubious people have been made free of this house."

"Good Heavens! But whatever your information may be I'm sure it isn't necessary for me to tell you that the lady of the house is perfectly ignorant of their dubiousness."

Naturally all his suspicions fastened at once upon the Buckinghams and their Irish intimates.

"Ah!" said Morton confidentially. "A nice lot the lady of the house has surrounded herself with! Fenians, sir! The house is getting quite a reputation as a sort of head-centre. Appointments have been made, meetings called at the lady's receptions—under her very nose, I might say. Hush, sir! Here they come for ices. Raspberry, or strawberry, or vanilla did you say, sir?"

Frank had only time to whisper a word. "Come to my rooms direct when you leave here, I shall be up all night. I've a great deal to say."

Then he took his ices and departed, but by this time all recollection of the personality of the elderly dowagers had faded from his memory. Whether they were attired in coerulean blue or sulphurous yellow he could not for the life of him have said. He only knew they looked very hot and red in the face, and were making a perfect gale with their fans. But, possibly, that by this time was the condition of every elderly dowager present.

With an ice in either hand he went peering into all the corners of the room, so far, at least, as he could approach them for the crush. He pushed on one side the curtain which half-draped the small con-

servatory leading off the drawing-room, thinking the ladies might have retreated thither for a pleasanter atmosphere.

But there he saw a sight which made him start back a step in astonishment, and put down his ices on a small table briskly enough—nothing less than Mab and Captain Buckingham seated side by side in confidential talk.

"You should make the attempt daily; spasmodic effort is useless. The habit should be steadily persevered in," Buckingham was saying in an authoritative tone that set Frank's blood boiling. As for Mab's face, it looked thoughtful, spiritual, dead white as her dress.

"Mab," said Frank, taking her hand, "will you go at once to Joyce? She is looking for you. She is in the music-room."

Mab rose instantly. Captain Buckingham rose also. "Won't you put your cloak on?" he asked; "you pass a window on the way to the music-room. Here is a wrap someone has left behind."

Frank had to stand still, and see Mab wrapped in an Indian shawl by Captain Buckingham.

"Good-night," she said to him softly, when the operation was over. "I shall remember."

Then, without so much as a look at Frank, who stood there steadily watching her, she went straight out of the room. She made no attempt to seek her sister. Straight up the stairs to her own room she went.

Mab's bed-room was large, and luxuriously furnished. It looked comfortable enough as she entered. Candles were lighted on the toilet-table, a big blazing fire crackled up the chimney and threw a lurid light on the figure of a girl kneeling on the hearth-rug, with her head buried in Mab's easy-chair.

"Why, Kathleen, what is it?" cried Mab in wonder, for muffled sobs seemed to come from out the cushions of the chair.

Kathleen's pretty, pouting face was all red and tear-stained as she jumped up from her knees to answer her young mistress's questions.

"Oh, it's nothing—nothing—nothing—Miss Mab," she cried vehemently, finding occupation meantime for her fingers in making up the fire, getting out brushes, lighting superfluous candles.

"But there must be something to make you sob like that," insisted Mab, going to

the girl, and laying her hand kindly on her shoulder. "Come, tell me, I may be able to help you."

Kathleen stood still with the match-box in her hand. She did not like to say that her tears arose from the fact that Ned had given her another terrible scolding, and had vowed he would have nothing more to do with her to the end of her life unless she kept her promise and married Bryan O'Shea. No, that wouldn't do at all: disagreeable cross-questioning might follow.

"It's about Ned, Miss Mab," she answered, steadying her voice, but not looking Mab in the face, "he has changed so lately. He's in with a lot of people who are no good at all to him, and he'll end with getting into the hands of the police, I'm afraid."

"Ah—h! Do you know the names of any of these people?" asked Mab, recollecting her unexpected meeting with Ned that morning on John Johnson the plasterer's doorstep.

"Oh, there are ever so many, Miss Mab, all Fenians or Nationalists. A bad set they are," answered Kathleen, still busy-ing herself at the toilet table.

Mab sighed. Thoughts came in a rush to her mind. After all the time, all the thought she had bestowed on this man, it was pitiful to think that he should thus determine to rush headlong to ruin. What could be goading him on to such mad folly? Here there came a conscious flush to her face, a stab of pain at her heart.

She knew his secret; it would have been folly to pretend, even to herself, that she did not. What, if instead of being the good angel she had intended to be to him she had been his evil one, and had darkened and cursed his life for him! What if it were his desperate love for her that was driving him to throw his life away in this reckless fashion! Could she do nothing, absolutely nothing, to save him?

She clasped her hands together, and sank into the chair into which Kathleen had wept out her sorrows.

"Leave me, Kathleen; put out every light in the room. I want to think," she said, leaning back in her chair and covering her eyes with her clasped hands.

Kathleen did as she was bidden. At the door of the room she paused, giving one backward look at her young mistress. It seemed to her that she had suddenly fallen into a sweet, sound sleep.

For one instant the two men in the drawing-room below faced each other.

"Is this intended for an insult?" asked Captain Buckingham.

"You may take it so if you like," answered Frank, carelessly turning on his heel, and with a look on his face that has ere this cost a man his life.

"The place is not convenient, or——" began Buckingham, but broke off abruptly. He made a movement as if about to pull out his watch, but checked himself. "I leave here at one——"

Frank's temper broke its bounds now.

"Do you want to know what time it is?" he said, his low, strained tones showing that he was at white heat. "It's a question, I believe, you are rather fond of asking. Well, I will tell you: time to give adventurers and conspirators a word of warning, and, if they don't take it, to hand them over to be dealt with by the law."

His temper had fairly vanquished his common-sense, or he would never have spoken such words as these.

Captain Buckingham, to all appearance, left him master of the situation. He grew ashen white, his eyes flashed.

"You may find another answer given to the question before long," he said, in a tone so low that an elderly dowager, who stood at his elbow gesticulating to Frank for her ice, did not hear a syllable.

Then he made straight for the door, and the sound of the front door closing, a minute after, told Frank he had quitted the house.

"What a consummate fool I've made of myself!" thought Frank. "I had better find Morton, and confess to him at once."

But, though he hunted high and low for the man, and questioned every servant he came upon as to his whereabouts, he could not light upon him. He had disappeared, possibly to report to Scotland Yard certain proceedings which had excited his suspicions, or—Frank could only hope so—it might be that he had departed on the traces of Captain Buckingham.

Frank stood thoughtfully for a moment at the head of the stairs, just outside the music-room door. What had he better do? Slip away quietly, take a cab to Scotland Yard, and find out how much mischief it was likely his hot temper had wrought? He took out his watch: the hands pointed to a quarter to one. People would soon be leaving now, his absence would not be noted. He had better possibly frame some word of excuse to Joyce.

There was she radiant still, just within the music-room, which had for the even-

ing been converted into a show-room for the brilliant silver and jewellery, which had been presented to her under the guise of wedding presents.

Her clear, joyous tones came to him over the heads of the guests pressing in or out of the room. "Now this is the treasure cave, you must say your 'open sesame' before I let you in. This is it—'Joyce, my dear, I think you're the happiest girl alive.'"

She caught a glimpse of Frank as he paused irresolutely outside, and whispered the hurried question:

"Have you seen Mab anywhere? She has not been near me all the evening."

Frank's answer was intercepted by the appearance of Mab herself, descending the staircase from the upper floor. She still had on the Indian shawl which Captain Buckingham had wrapped around her. Her face was white as before, her eyes looked fixed and unseeing.

Joyce made sure she would come straight into the music-room for a passing word, and drew back a little into the room to make way for her. To her surprise she passed on and down the second flight of stairs. People were beginning to depart; a stream soon flowed in between Joyce, Frank, and the staircase. A sudden terror seized Joyce. She caught at Frank's arm. "Oh, follow her, what is she going to do?" she whispered, for the look on Mab's face had fallen like a chill shadow upon her.

It was easy to say, "follow her"; a bird's wings over the heads of the departing guests might have done it easily enough. Nothing else.

Frank dived in and out, with and against the stream as best he could. He got somehow to the drawing-room, had a tolerably fair view of it, thanks to two inches more of stature than most of the people there owned to. Mab was not there. Sylvia Buckingham was standing in her dark dress at Mrs. Shenstone's elbow, and that lady, looking a little tired and jaded in her blush-rose garments, serenely smiled on her departing guests.

On to the dining-room, thence to the supper-room, Frank went. Not a sign of Mab anywhere. Thence out into the hall, on to the doorstep even, where stood a crowd of great-coated footmen, waiting for their respective masters and mistresses.

"Are you looking for anyone, sir?" asked one of these, seeing 'where has she gone?' plainly written on Frank's face. "A lady in an Indian shawl came out five

minutes ago. We thought she was making for one of the carriages, but she passed them all and took the first turning to the right."

Mechanically Frank took a hat, which some thoughtful hand held out to him, and dashed out into the darkness. The bright lamps of the line of carriages which reached from the door to the corner of the square, made patches of shifting light on the damp pavement. Beyond the line the dingy vista of the street which ran off the square showed dimly through the gloom. Down the turning the man had indicated Frank went at the top of his speed. It seemed to him, as he turned the corner, that a figure resembling Mab's disappeared at the farther end. Faster and faster flew his feet over the ground. The by-streets leading down to the river were deserted and silent. A crawling cab, two slipshod girls, a belated street minstrel, were the only representatives of the bustling life which tided along the wider thoroughfare.

He turned sharply round the narrow street where it seemed to him Mab had disappeared. A gas-lamp at the corner of an alley leading off this street lighted up a gleam of gold in the shawl of a small figure which passed swiftly beneath it. Frank was running now, and, almost breathless, he gained the corner of this alley, to see Mab, or, at any rate, a small dark figure, that might be Mab, standing on a door-step at the farther end.

Either the door must have been innocent of bolt or bar, or someone from within must have opened it, for Frank to his terror saw it swing back on its hinges, and the small dark figure disappear.

"Mab! Mab!" he shouted frantically, and the dark, empty street and deserted-looking houses threw back his cry at him in hollow, mocking tones.

The whole thing seemed to him like some hideous nightmare, in which against his will, he had been suddenly forced to bear a part.

"What in Heaven's name is she bent upon?" he asked himself desperately, as he gained the doorstep and pushed back the door through which the girl had disappeared.

He found himself in a narrow dark passage with a door at the farther end, from beneath which struggled a yellow gleam of light.

There was Mab, in front of him sure enough; there was also a man who had seized her by the arms, and was saying in

loud rough tones: "How now, young woman! What's your game, I should like to know?"

"Let her go!" shouted Frank with all the breath that was left in his body.

"Who are you?" began the man, still holding Mab fast, for her aim was evidently to pass by him into the room beyond.

Frank had not learned boxing for nothing. One well-directed blow sent the man reeling backwards, and crash he fell, bursting open the door of the room whence the light streamed. There came a sudden hubbub of voices from a table round which three men were seated. One sprang forward and seized Mab, dragging her towards the door of the house. It was Ned Donovan. Frank was surrounded, the light on the table was put out, but not before he had time to recognise Captain Buckingham's dark face and broad shoulders. He felt himself seized from behind, there came a heavy blow on the back of his head, then all was darkness and silence to him.

SOME SCENES IN PIRÆUS.

PIRÆUS, as everyone knows, is the port of Athens. It is a lively marine place of some twenty thousand inhabitants, with deep water in its small but excellent harbour to the very edge of the modern quays, which are a resort of perennial lounging for the men and boys of all colours and nationalities who form its marine population. During a walk up and down this promenade, past the boat-loads of oranges being landed from Crete, or Cos, or Syra, or other isles of the Archipelago, one is sure to be accosted in a good many languages, for the Piræus watermen are as pertinacious as they are polyglot, and very quick to scent an Englishman.

"Boat, Signore, to the yacht? I spik good English, and am friend of all English gentlemen in Piræus and Athens. I—Spiro—take you everywhere where you have to eat good as in England, and want no money for to do it. No, no, I not a greedy Greek, but a Ionian. Them Greeks all thieves and rogues. See, Signore, a card give me by one English gentelman who was please with me."

This is the sort of address to which a stranger in Scotch tweeds is pretty sure to be subjected in Piræus.

Master Spiro, in this instance, proved as good as his word. He guided us willy-

nilly to a restaurant in a back street, and with a cordial shake of the hand, and another exhibition of the card he departed, having accepted a cigarette merely as a genial cementing of our friendship for future service.

We take up a position in this restaurant commanding the window and the procession of miscellaneous individuals on the other side. There are Turks with set expressions; peasants from the Peloponnesus in rough hair dresses, open at the breast, and with pistols in buff leather cases at the waist; Albanians in white cotton shirts, frilled and starched from their stout legs like very short ball-dresses, with long red stockings to the instep, and curly toes peaked by a parti-coloured ball of worsted; Nubian men, women, and boys, with the blackest of faces and the most athletic of bodies; and hundreds of Greek soldiers of the latest conscription: merry lads with no hair on their chins, who seemed intuitively to perceive in all this war preparation and writing of manifestoes the windy fiasco it has proved to be. There are many sailors, also, so like our own British tars in apparel, demeanour, and looks, that, save for the Greek lettering on their caps, and King George's crown, one might well think they had been shipped at Chatham or Portsmouth, and were now taking holiday on shore in the port they had come to blockade.

And what does one get to eat in a native house of a typical Greek town like Piræus? Well, we begin with a bouillon, much flavoured with olive oil, the staple relish of all olive-growing countries. Then comes one of the fat pink fishes, for which this part of the Levant is famous. Its flesh melts in the mouth, and it, too, is soured in oil. Onions and potatoes are eaten with the fish, and lemon juice adds to its piquancy. A small beefsteak, worthy of Fleet Street, follows the fish. Next, a confiture, with a centre of rice meal coloured with saffron, and served with a sauce of sweet liquor; the rice meal being enclosed in a luscious coating of something for all the world like layers of goldbeater's skin. Add to these solids, a bottle of the wine of Kephisia, eighteen miles from Piræus, and you must admit that Piræus is not a desert. The cost of this dinner was a trifle over a shilling.

Our first visit to Piræus was at a time of secular jubilee. It was the last day of the Carnival. The shops were crammed

to the pavement with varied good things; the streets overflowed with vendors of edible trifles, such as Turkish delight, nuts, gingerbread, Constantinople sweetmeats, and oranges. Everyone wore a smiling face. Many were in buffoon disguise: their jackets strung with strips of coloured paper, tissue cocked hats on their heads, lathe swords and scimitars by their sides, dummy pistols in their waistbands, spectacles of vast girth encircling their eyes. These revellers had amiable peculiarities of their own. They were not noisy. They stalked hither and thither with uplifted heads, demure as Brahmans in the final stage of their life career, and as silent. Moreover, they were lavish of what little money their circumstances and King George's Chancellor of the Exchequer allowed them to spend upon themselves. The Piræus seemed to have a number of small black boys, engaged in boot cleaning, quite out of proportion to its normal population. And ever and anon these speechless tom-fools would stop in their stiff promenade, lean their backs against a wall, and let this or that giggling little Nubian clean their dusty nethers. Nor was payment ever omitted, that we could see.

One buffoon, more of a wag than common, had bare feet, and for five minutes at a time he would stand with one foot on the shoeblack's block, staring at the sky before him, completely heedless of the roars of laughter which broke fitfully from the broad-faced crowd of merry-makers, who soon assembled to contemplate him and his absurdities. Another clown, by as quaint a farcical device, divided with this gentleman the suffrages of premier popularity. He was a tall and thin bald-headed personage, dressed in a green gown to his heels, and throughout the afternoon he patrolled the bustling thoroughfare with a long crooked cardboard nose upon his face, and in his hands a twelve-foot fishing-rod, from which dangled a fig for the little Greek boys to bite at while he walked. The sport was animated wherever he went. He lost one fig about every quarter of an hour; but, when one went, it was immediately replaced by another from a leather satchel by his side, without the movement of a muscle in his face; and so he continued on his ridiculous way.

To give a finish to this atmosphere of festivity, the church bells of the city volleyed tumultuously at intervals, and

the different Greek war-ships at that time in harbour fired blank cartridges. The smoke lay thick over the pale green water towards Salamis all the afternoon: it was as though the war long threatened had at length burst upon the country.

Our second visit to Piræus was on Good Friday. When Lent was beginning, the olive woods between Athens and its port were golden with buttercups, and perfumed with the scent of flowering beans. At the end of that "Sarakosté," so dreaded by the Northern traveller in Greece travelling with his Northern appetite, the buttercups had gone; but the vines had put forth their tender green shoots, and the long meadow grass under the gnarled trunks of the trees was scarlet with multitudes of great poppies.

There were no brick-coloured cakes and comfits for sale at the Athens railway station this day. Devotional books, small votive offerings, heart-shaped and otherwise, in various metals, and candles of all lengths, colours, and qualities supplied their place. Not that the daily newspapers were wanting; but they for the moment had lost their bellicose tone. The sheets were occupied for the most part with articles of a supramundane character that might have come from the pen of the Metropolitan of the city, instead of the impetuous young unreasonables of the respective editorial offices. The keynote of the day, however, was distinctly in the candles. Everyone had his sheaf of brown, white or yellow, plain or bespangled dips, substantial at their base, but tapering to a fine point at the other extremity. And in the railway cars (made at Oldbury, and drawn by a locomotive from a Leeds factory) the bulk of the conversation depended upon the candles: strangers comparing their purchases, and by such comparison increasing or lessening their satisfaction in their bargains. One could not but feel amused, moreover, to see the way in which a young Greek dandy, whose starched white collar touched his ears, laid aside his large-crooked walking-stick, and nursed the candles he was taking from Athens, as assiduously as if he had been born and bred in a crèche.

Saving the omnipresent phenomenon of the candles, Piræus was like a city besieged or under some other great affliction. The church bells tolled dismally one after the other, the ships in the harbour fired minute guns, and carried their flags at half-mast. By far the majority of the shops

were shut, and those that were open offered only the barest of necessaries for the hungry person in quest of a meal—painted, hard-boiled eggs, which it were a scandal to eat for the next forty hours, olives, lettuces, dry bread, and snails. Undemonstrative loungers thronged the highways, and massed by the slop-shops, which flourish in the marine part of the city. Men, women, and children, in profound black, with their liturgical books in their hands, and never without their diminishing group of candles, sped quietly to the churches, muttering ejaculations to the "Panagia" (the All-Holy: that is, the Virgin) as they went. And in all the churches on this hot late April day, from dawn until the procession with the symbolical "Corpus Christi" through the streets at midnight, relays of priests, choristers, and congregations kept up the sequence of the elaborate ritual, the multitudinous Kyries and genuflexions which mark Good Friday as the most exacting day in the Greek calendar.

We wandered away from the city towards the coast-line of the rocky peninsula of Akté, with its triple harbours; but it was impossible to escape from the sound of the bells. Even in the tiny pocket port of Munychia—with its ruined mole and trimmings of the time of Pericles, now so shallow that its half a dozen fishing smacks almost graze the bottom at its entrance—even here, divided as it is from Piræus by a bold hill some hundreds of feet in height—the tolling oppressed us, for on the top of the hill is the monastery of the Hagios Elias, and its deep bell seemed hardly intermittent.

Thence, by ancient rock tombs and many a huge wall of rough-dressed stones, now levelled with the ground, to the second of Akté's ports, that of Zéa, with white villas at its extremities, a score or so of galley-slips left almost high and dry by the retrocession of the sea, and its theatre and coffee houses; by the malodorous water, open and empty, in the hands of the cleaners, to be ready for the licence and thirsty laughter of joyous Easter.

We enter a church situated on one of Akté's eminences. It is full to the door, and outside, ranged upon the rock commanding a view of the interior, are a number of worshippers who follow the service as vigorously as if they were under the roof, so that it is no easy matter to approach the nave, whither all eyes are drawn. But from afar we can see the rapid movement of the tall hats of the

priests, and hear their odd chants as they go round and round some object in the centre with bewildering speed. This object proves to be a bier, on which is a model body of the Saviour. Over the model is an eccentric baldaquin studded with emblematic ornaments, all of coloured tin. There is a tin heart surmounted by a cross of tin. A tin ladder climbs to the heart, and a soldier with two spears of tin is attached to the ladder. On the other side is a large cock represented in the act of crowing, and a figure symbolising Saint Peter in a state of contrition. As illustrative of sacred history, these ornaments attract the devout gaze of the scores of tanned Greeks and foreign fishermen who are able to see them. But there is one thing besides—a pall of white satin, with an embroidered Christ upon it, set with large gems, rubies, and emeralds, and diamonds, and amethysts; a sumptuous piece of work, of high intrinsic value. And ever and anon there is a lull in the service, permitting those nearest to the bier to lower their heads and kiss this coruscating jewelled pall. Two of the pappás stand by the while, and by the light in the eyes of such as are able to get near enough to accomplish this act of devotion, one understands that this is the most cherished function of the day for the laity. Thus early, it is not everyone who can approach and kiss the pall. By-and-by it will be the one goal of every dweller in the neighbourhood; but at present they who can avail themselves of the scant breathing spaces, during which the priests wipe their glistening brows, or re-tie their disordered locks, are exceptionally fortunate.

Outside the church is the belfry, a detached little building looking straight at the Acropolis, six miles away. It has two bells, one above the other; and a knot of small boys struggle for their turn at the ropes, which they pull strenuously every ten or fifteen seconds, first the tenor, then the bass.

At noon, there is a brief interval of cessation. One white-haired pappás stays with the model and pall, but all the others, and most of the congregation, troop out into the air, loosen their neckerchiefs, and give utterance to the chatter they have so long repressed. For those who find that their constitution imperatively asks for a little worldly nourishment, provision is made on the other side of the belfry. Here a baker has set up a stall for the sale of dry rings of bread and parched peas. The man or

woman, who prefers something richer than such fare, may trudge to the city for it. But if the pappá contents himself with a pea and a mouthful of bread, followed by a sip of lemonade, surely the congregation ought not to have fastidious stomachs. It is a pretty scene to watch these scores of honest people break their fast under the blue sky, with the whole of Athens lying on the plain beyond, half-girdled by the grey slopes of Hymettus and Parnes, and the dazzling Ægean close by on the other hand, Ægina in the distance, and Salamis seeming a mere stone's throw away. A flock of sheep—whose persistent bleating has been an enduring protest against the mysterious noises of the day—one by one tread towards the church, timidly, with heads pushed to the front, to see if haply they may at length satisfy their curiosity. But no sooner do the priests and people move away from the baker than the quadrupeds turn their backs, and, in a wild "sauve qui peut," scamper over the rocks and ruins, out of sight.

Proceeding through the city, and across the old Agora and the square of Apollo, one comes to the most northerly of the basins of the harbour of Piræus. Here the recession of the water is very apparent. The galley slips of this part of the harbour are high and dry. Children play about them all day long, or fish from them with a far-reaching rod. Stagnant pools mark this quarter of the city as a haunt of malaria. But on this Good Friday we found the damp ground in the vicinity occupied by herds of oxen and flocks of sheep and lambs, under the charge of copper-coloured shepherds, to the eye as fierce, tawny, and unkempt as the most bedraggled of the beasts. The lowing and bleating silenced the bells of the city, or nearly so, and seemed to incite the pigs, dogs, and children of the district to cry and shout in their turn. These poor oxen were deadly tired; they had come, some of them, all the way from Thessaly, and had arrived, as it was, only just in time for the Easter market. But the tumult of them had already attracted the butchers and buyers, wholesale and retail. Swart men and sharp-nosed women, who ought rather to have been in church, were punching the beasts, and lifting the unwilling sheep and lambs from the ground by their four legs to estimate their fleshiness. Beef is not a favourite meat with Orientals; to them a cow is a source of milk rather than of beef-steaks.

We could not ascertain the selling price of the oxen; but the sheep and lambs were in much request, and a lamb of prime quality, with no blemish, was to be had for six or seven shillings. Within twenty hours or so none but the poorest of Greek households would be unprovided with its Paschal lamb, tied, fleas and all, to the bed-post of the establishment, until it was time to cut its throat, and impale it whole on one of the big skewers which have been a current article of commerce in the streets for the last few days. While we watched, several of the lambs were disposed of, and the purchasers slung the little innocents round their necks, holding them by the legs under their chins, now and then caressing them with a fondness that was to prove abominably sycophantic in the end. But the sheep and the more adolescent of the lambs were treated with less consideration. They were carried by their legs between two people, and their muffled bleats of protest were disregarded.

In this quarter of Piræus is its cemetery, a garden of flowers and cypresses, and with a church bell as voluble as any other. The spot is well chosen. Elsewhere in its vicinity there is practically no soil over the hard rock. The Necropolis of old Piræus was not far distant. Its empty tombs, cut clean out of the stone, line the road for a considerable way. Here it was that Lord Elgin discovered what has been surmised to be the burial-place of Aspasia. It contained a "large marble vase five feet round, with a bronze one inside, a lachrymatory of alabaster, a wreath of myrtle in gold, and bones." The site is remarkable for its bleakness on the side that looks towards Salamis and the sea, and for its superb views of Athens, behind; but, nowadays, an enterprising Municipal Board, or some such organisation, has resolved to fertilise it with the rubbish of the city; and, from the acres of filth and odds and ends, which are gradually composing a layer of vegetable matter on the barren rock, very fine smells may be enjoyed by the pedestrian who wanders that way when the sun is hot in the heavens.

Continuing past these ancient sepulchral chambers, we strike a little valley of vineyards, with stray fig and olive trees, and a small shrine to the Virgin, where two tracks bifurcate. And then, by some judicious surveying and steering, it is possible to clamber through the meagre barley fields, and over the uplands, towards a conspicuous heap of rocks and stones on what

seems to be an artificially accumulated base. This is nothing less than the throne-seat of Xerxes, whence he watched the strife between his own multitudinous galleys, hugging the coast at his feet, and the Greeks in line with the shore of Salamis, whose sandy point stretched within a mile and a half of the gold and ivory support of the King.

But to return to the cemetery. A little apart from its church is a comfortable-looking, square, red-brick building, with thick walls and two oval glass windows. Our curiosity was excited by its appearance and situation. It had not the air of a dwelling-house; nor was it a church. Some pots of flowers in its portico seemed to mark its tender associations; but the nature of these from the outside was only dimly conjecturable. Entering the room—for it was nothing more—at first sight our perplexity was increased. It proved to be a large, lofty, airy apartment, with rafters, above, and an irregular flagged floor; while, from its furniture, one might have supposed that it was a lawyer's deed-room, or a banker's safe, or the play-box depository of an English preparatory school. On three of its sides chests were piled almost to the rafters. They were of different sizes, colours, and materials. Some, two feet by one and a half, with a depth of a foot; others as large as six feet, by a breadth and depth of two feet. They were brown, black, yellow, and grey, and of wood or tin. Some had oval lids, and these were padlocked; but others had lost their lids, or burst them apart; while others again were roughly closed with nails.

But the inscriptions on these boxes soon enlightened us. Most of them bore initials or names with dates, and, painted upon them, either a cross or a skull and cross-bones, with the elucidatory word "osteon," (i.e., bones-remains) or "osta." It was a Greek charnel-house—nothing less. And this was otherwise made apparent by a pile of white cotton bags in one corner of the room, each marked "osteon" or "osta," with a single name, and by the jagged conformation caused by the bulging of the dry bones within them. The bags weighed uniformly a mere six or seven pounds, and some of them had broken, so that a thigh or an arm-bone protruded through the fracture. It seemed a little incongruous to discover half a dozen beer bottles, empty, standing on a ledge in this room, by the bags, and underneath a shallow concave wooden structure, ornamented

with black cloth and silver fittings, which was a coffin-lid. But the presence in one of these bottles of a much-guttered piece of candle, and of a tin vessel which, from its shape and incrustations could, be nothing except a coffee-pot, seemed to show that even the most dismal of localities cannot coerce the human appetite. Who knows? Perhaps the hardened worldling who devotes the anniversaries of their demise to a visit to the bones of his friends and relations, finds a cup of coffee agreeable on these occasions, and makes it on the spot. And, since the average Greek priest will beseech the stranger who looks into his church not to trouble himself about his lighted pipe inside the sacred building, it is at least possible that the mourner inside this charnel-house may solace himself with a cigarette as well as coffee.

In the centre of the floor of this room was an iron ring, welded into one of the paving-stones. This flag yielded to a trifling exertion of strength. We gradually pulled it from its socket. There, underneath, was disclosed a wide and deep pit, remarkable at first for nothing save its gloom, and the rush of cold air which seemed to blow from it. A moment later, however, we were constrained to let go the stone, and all was as before again. That moment sufficed to explain to us that in this hole were accumulated the bones and decaying bodies of those parishioners, whose friends either could not, or would not, store them in labelled bags or boxes. An unpleasant effluvium had followed the whiff of air, and, ere the stone had fallen back to its place, several score of large blue-bottle flies buzzed into the upper world.

No one, who is aware of the impudence and multitude of the Greek fleas in Greece, will wonder that, by this time, we had become sensible of their presence also in the building. It behoved us, therefore, to depart. And as, in the meantime, an abrupt change in the weather had occurred—Athens and its Acropolis being half hid by a low-lying rain-cloud—we returned to the railway station without delay; but, ere we could reach it, the rain could be seen falling in torrents over the city. Then, suddenly, there came a break in the clouds; the sunlight shot through, and a refulgent rainbow held the city in its embrace. The Acropolis was in the exact centre of this exquisite arc, which transfigured it and all Athens for a full quarter of an hour.

THE DOWNHILL OF LIFE.

IF a writer of the present day took up the story of King Lear, as it is found in the chronicles of Geoffrey of Monmouth, and set to work to transmute it into a modern romance, he or she would find it necessary to change almost entirely the "motif" and action of the piece. Filial devotion and the sorrows of age would hardly prove attractive at the circulating libraries. Youth will be served, both in fiction and the drama; and, if old age is to be rendered interesting, there must be a certain anti-pathetic flavour about it. Shylock will always command interest; an old villain is treated with a certain amount of consideration; but the old gentleman, with only his grey hairs, his virtues, and his grievances to recommend him, is sure to be looked upon as a bore.

And yet old age, with its avenues and approaches, should be an object of interest to all. With the banquet of life in full prospect, the thought of its declining shades may be evaded, but for those who have dined, or who have arrived at the conviction that there is surely no place at the table for them, the question of age becomes serious, solemn, and pathetic.

*Ma vie entre déjà dans l'ombre de la mort,
Et je commence à voir le grand côté des choses.*

Thus writes Victor Hugo, the great modern exemplar of the possibilities of dignified old age, but, for the great bulk of us, what prospect is there of seeing these grand visions? The narrow side of things is the view often present to failing faculties, narrow views, and short forecasts of the future, just as in illness the horizon is bounded by the coming basin of gruel or the recurring dose of physic.

And yet it seems clear that a great deal more might be made out of age than is generally the case. The experience of a life is surely something, and should give clearness of vision; while, if no active part can be taken in the affairs of life, surely these never lose their interest to the intelligent spectator.

The spectacle of Christmas in London naturally suggests a study of old age. For that is a season when, after all, the old people are much more in evidence than the young, whose especial festival Christmas is supposed to be. The most striking feature of the London streets, and of the equally busy railways of the town and suburbs, is at this time the number of elderly people

who are moving about. Instead of working men and women, intent on their employment, we meet with old people of every variety.

Almshouses and workhouses contribute their inmates, happy for the day in belonging to the general crowd, and feeling the free breath of heaven, but who, before night, will perhaps be glad enough to creep back to the shelter of their forlorn abodes. And then there are the old people who have homes of their own, small and precarious—caretakers in empty houses, who encamp in the basement of the deserted building; or dwellers in lofty garrets, whose scant breath rarely permits a visit to the street below.

All these the bells of Christmas bring out from holes and corners. Thrust aside and elbowed out of the way at other times, now they have their innings. Now they come forth en masse, and with their garments of ancient fashion, and faces worn and withered, they bring into the life of to-day certain ghostly touches of vanished merriment and memories of long past enjoyments.

In wealthier homes the elders sit at home in state, and entertain their children's children with feasts, and games, and sparkling gifts; but in humbler quarters it is the old people who have to stir about in search of Christmas festivities. It is the son, who is in work, who gives the banquet, or the daughter who keeps the huckster's shop; and the old people have nothing to bring in the way of gifts, unless it be a shiny orange or a rosy-cheeked apple for the little ones.

But it is not the festive aspect of the season that strikes one so much as the pathetic. What of all the people, no longer young, to whom such anniversaries come as a reminder of departing strength and vigour, and who now take their seats at the board among the ancients with many a secret pang?

Like most of the ills of life, perhaps old age is more grievous in the anticipation than the reality. But we are right, after all, in fighting it off as long as we can, and in assuming to the bitter end the freshness of youthful feeling. There is no more venial deception than that of the middle-aged man or woman who postdates the record of advancing years, and makes believe to be still among the young. And in the same category are those devices which conceal the ravages of time and give an artificial youth. For they incite people to live up to them.

Even at seventy a woman sighs to hear herself described as an elderly person. The description may be just, but it is no less cruel.

For life glides on so imperceptibly that people are unconscious of any change in themselves. Perhaps, indeed, the inner spirit never does change—that spirit which is rather a witness and chronicler of the events of life, than an active participator in their occurrence. And in this way it comes as an unpleasant surprise to be looked upon as elderly. No doubt the disadvantages of advancing years are felt more keenly by women than by men. But, by either sex, how bravely often a losing battle is fought—a battle with failing resources, failing health, and the lassitude of age!

For all that, there is often a strong feeling among the young that the side of age has unduly the advantage. How many a young aspirant complains that his work is neglected, his abilities starved, while elderly mediocrities occupy all the avenues to success! But these last, however successful, have also their envy of the young. The time of struggle over, the despair of youth that was once so bitter, was it not better after all than the success which has come too late to be enjoyed, and can only be retained by exertions that have now become painful?

There is, however, a general agreement of witnesses, from the age of Plato to that of Darwin, that old age under suitable conditions may be as happy as any other period of life. There should be dignity and independence, with that hold upon the interests of the surrounding world, which of itself brings "honour, love, obedience, troops of friends."

And yet such an ending to life, however desirable, is not always the desire of the heart. A man may look forward to

Find out the peaceful hermitage,
The hairy gown and mossy cell.

This instinct of seclusion which seems to come to us from primitive life, is probably confined to the male sex. The elderly Brahman is enjoined to retire from the world and spend the remainder of his days as an anchorite; and a similar feeling, stronger in previous centuries than in our own, has led to the foundation of many refuges for age in the way of almshouses and brotherhoods. But at no period of life is seclusion a natural condition; and, most certainly, the collection of a number of elderly people in a kind of enforced association has never had a successful result. The

mixture of ages, classes, interests, sexes, is the one thing that keeps human society sweet and wholesome, and the influence of age is as necessary in the perfect community as the vigour and initiative of youth. Nor can it be a good thing to confine old people in barracks as in work-houses—to spend sad, lonely, loveless days amid bare and desolate surroundings, to fret and grumble at each other, and all the little world about them.

And here we may regret the decline of those handicrafts which furnished even extreme old age with some employment. Old Elspeth in the chimney corner, with her distaff and her bundle of yarn which is of actual use in the family economy, is a far more dignified person than Elspeth with vacant hands, crouching over the fire in the bare ward of a poor-house. In the Norman cottages the old grandmother winds cotton all day long, and prides herself in adding something to the family store. Or it is the old grandfather, who makes turves out of spent tan for the winter firing, or ranges the forest, and rakes together his bundle of dried sticks.

Although there are many illustrious examples of age in the van of the great workers of the age, yet there is no doubt that this is a period when veterans in general are rather at a discount. The old soldier is no longer in the ranks; there are no more grizzled Captains; the grey-headed Colonel, the father of his regiment, is a sight no longer to be seen. The battles of the world are, for the future, to be fought by boys and striplings, and seniority is likely henceforward to be looked upon as rather a bar than a claim to advancement. And the same tendency is to be observed in other directions. Those who have attained no commanding position before life is on the turn with them, are shouldered aside to make room for younger men. And all this terribly increases the strain upon men of middle age, while a feeling of hopelessness of further struggle comes upon those who are left stranded by the way.

Those who study the passing chronicles of life in the newspapers of the day, foreign as well as English, must have been struck by the increasing number of suicides to be attributed to the hopelessness and misery of advancing years. The dismal record of suicides has its bearing upon the general state of affairs. With advancing prosperity the number of those who thus fly the ills of life remains a pretty constant quantity; but any check to material progress at once

swells the ranks of the self-slaughtered. Thus in 1879 suicides made a great spring from an average of sixty-nine to eighty-one per million, and it is instructive if not inspiring, to note that by far the greater number of cases occur when the medium line of life is passed. Thus the number of cases between the ages of forty-five and fifty-five is far in advance of those at an earlier period, while the same remark applies to the next decade, although here there is a slight decrease from the one immediately before it. After sixty-five a dogged resignation seems to take the place of despair, and the number of suicides rapidly diminishes.

Now if we take the population returns for the last census, we shall find that, out of nearly twenty-six millions, the population of England and Wales, the number of men and women then in existence, and aged fifty years and upwards, is just about three millions and three-quarters, or rather more than a seventh of the whole population; and we come to the remarkable fact that this elder seventh furnishes at least half the number of suicides. And this is surely a strange fact which makes us speculate as to the possibility of making life more endurable to the rank and file of humanity, and especially to those who are verging into years.

The one encouraging fact is that, according to general testimony, the first steps towards age are the worst. From forty to fifty has been well called the old age of youth—full of regrets and vain revolt against the inevitable. But the following decade, the youth of old age, is often marked by renewed vigour and enterprise, if only we are content to follow the advice of good old Hoyle, and play the stages of the game: to follow the score, that is, and not attempt a grand game when there is only the odd trick to be won.

CHRONICLES OF SCOTTISH COUNTIES.

MIDLOTHIAN.

ALTHOUGH officially the county in question is known as Edinburgh, the name of Midlothian is both more pleasantly familiar and historically more suggestive. If the old Tolbooth of Edinburgh was rightly named the heart of Midlothian, the Lothians themselves might be styled the heart of Scotland. There could hardly have been a Scotland without the Lothians, any more

than there could have been a France without Paris. Here was the one element of stability that preserved the unity of the nation and crown of Scotland. Elsewhere the hold of the central power was often feeble and precarious. The powerful feudatories who overshadowed the royal throne often bade fair to overwhelm it altogether. The wild chiefs of the North, the Lord of the Western Isles, the proud Douglas, and the self-seeking Hamilton, together were thrice a match for the feeble and often impecunious monarchy, and singly could often bid it defiance. But the Lothians were always loyal, and from this stronghold the King and the law which he represented eventually made themselves recognised throughout the land.

Perhaps it helped somewhat towards this end that the population of the Lothians was rather Saxon than Celtic, and that the race of Cerdic and Egbert was continued in the line of Scottish Kings. The earliest existing building on the crest of the Castle Rock of Edinburgh is the chapel of the Saxon princess, that sainted Margaret, the Queen of Malcolm Canmore, who brought to Scotland, as part of her dower, that priceless relic of the true Cross, that Holy Rood, which was to give its name to the future palace of the royal line.

The first view of Edinburgh strikes the visitor, not only with admiration, but surprise. The site seems such a strange one for a great city. The usual dispensation that sends a big river rolling by a big town is altogether wanting. The wonder is vivid as to how it got there, perched upon its rocky height, this famous city, as Walter Scott describes it,

Whose ridgy back heaves to the sky,
Piled deep and massy, close and high,
Mine own romantic town!

What other town is there indeed that shares so completely in the grandeur of its natural surroundings as old Edinburgh, that seems like a part of the crested height on which it rears its dark bulk? The great cities of the plain have their own atmosphere, their own artificial climate; but the reek of Edinburgh mixes with the clouds of heaven, and, whether in haze and mist, in the darkness of the thunder-cloud, or the clear shining after rain, the city takes its part in the scene, and darkens, shines, and glowers in sympathy with every changing phase of light and shadow.

In truth Edinburgh was born of the rock; its Acropolis was the germ of its being; its steep High Street has crawled

slowly down from the Castle gate—that gate where Kings have sat in judgment, as the Kings of Judæa sat in the Gate of Jerusalem. For long centuries the city clung to the height that gave it birth, although not in its early life a fortified town. The real city of refuge was the Castle steep, and it was not till the middle of the fifteenth century that the town was girt with a wall, and the town began to rise storey above storey,

Within its sleepy limits pent,
By bulwark line and battlement,
And flanking towers and laky flood.

The "laky flood" was the once familiar "Nor' Loch," remembered even now by ancient witnesses as a foul and evil-smelling morass, which occupied the bottom of the ravine between the new and old towns, but which once, no doubt, was a crystal tarn, and deep enough to afford a complete defence to the north side of the town. After the defeat of Flodden, in the panic which followed that disaster, the burghers of Edinburgh extended the compass of the town wall so as to embrace the suburb which had sprung up outside the old wall, and within these limits the town grew upwards towards the sky.

It was at the latter end of the eighteenth century that Edinburgh finally burst its bonds, and that a new town was created on the open plateau which rose on the other side of the deep ravine of the Nor' Loch and sloped gradually down to the estuary of the Forth, or, as Walter Scott pictures his favourite town:

Unconfined and free,
Flinging thy white arms to the sea.

As for the origin of Edinburgh, it seems probable that the settlement of the Lothians proceeded side by side with that of the English part of Northumbria. The coast indeed, and the broad estuary of the Forth, would seem specially tempting to the restless dwellers on the opposite coasts. Landing on the low-lying shores of the Firth, the site of Edinburgh and its neighbouring hills appear boldly outlined against the sky; the conical height of Arthur's Seat dominating the whole, from which the outline sinks in a graceful curve, to rise again to the fine escarpment of cliff called Salisbury Crag. Further to the west the same outline is repeated at a lower level. Calton Hill forms the summit, and the outline continues across the invisible ravine, till it breaks off in the precipitous crag now crowned by the Castle; a rock which, from the earliest times, must have

been held as a stronghold by the race in possession of the district.

Angles and Picts may have fought for the possession of the Maiden Castle, for that is the earliest name that has come down to us as applied to Edinburgh. It is the "castrum puellarum" of ancient charters—an attractive title which there is little in its history to justify. The term Maiden, indeed, may be a corruption of an earlier Celtic title; but we must remember that there are many Maiden Castles in various parts of England, as well as Maiden ways and roads. The example of Maiden Lane may be cited as a familiar instance; and in fact many early earthworks, and other remains, not quite grand enough in scope for the work of the Evil One, are ascribed to the Maiden—a Maid of the Mist as far as etymology is concerned, for the origin of the term can only be guessed at.

There is little doubt, however, that Edwin, the great Northumbrian King, built a fort upon the rock and gave it his own name as Edwinsberg. And the Lothians and the Border counties to the south seem to have been rather English than Scotch till the beginning of the eleventh century, when the country passed as a matter of peaceful arrangement from the Earl of Northumbria to the King of Scots.

From that time the Castle of Edinburgh became the occasional seat of the royal line; but it was never, perhaps, a favourite residence of the Court. Dunfermline and Perth were successively the head-quarters of royalty, and it was only after the murder of James the First that the superior security of the Castle on the rock, and its greater distance from the wild tribes of the hills, brought the widowed Queen and the infant King, and with them the seat of government, to Midlothian.

Almost impregnable from its commanding position, the Castle of Edinburgh, though often besieged and captured, has never been taken by direct assault. In Bruce's days, when the fortress was in possession of the English, as Barbour relates, the Earl of Moray laid siege to it, but despaired of taking it, when one of the gentlemen of his troop, William Francis by name, volunteered to lead a party to escalate the rock. This Francis had, in his salad days, been an inmate of the Castle, and had then a sweetheart in the Grass-market whom he visited secretly at night, letting himself down on the south side of the crag, where there was a kind of goat's path from one projecting rock to another,

and ascending in the same way. The Earl determined to make the attempt in person, and one dark night, with thirty picked men behind him, he followed William Francis, who led the way, climbing from cranny to cranny in the almost precipitous face of the cliff. When the party at last had nearly reached the foot of the wall, they narrowly missed being discovered by the guard, who were going the round of the walls, when one of the picket threw a stone down the cliff, crying out: "Aha, I see you well!" as he peered over the battlements. The escalading party clung to their narrow perch in desperation, expecting nothing less than immediate destruction, but the soldier's alarm was but a time-honoured jest, and the guard only laughed and passed on. Once at the foot of the wall the Scots planted their ladders. It is difficult to conceive how they managed to drag such encumbrances up the cliff without being discovered, but there were the ladders anyhow, according to the chronicle, and the men swarmed up, and soon had mastered the watch and captured the garrison.

In the following reign, that of David the Second, we find the Castle again in the possession of the adherents of Edward Baliol; and this time the castle was captured by the Knight of Liddesdale, who made use of a stratagem which was as old as the siege of Troy. A vessel put into Leith loaded with hampers of wine, as was pretended, and the Governor of the Castle, joyfully consenting to receive such a pleasing cargo, the hampers with their bearers turned to armed men, who, raising the war-cry of "a Douglas," speedily disposed of the too confiding Castellan and his garrison.

After this exploit the Castle seems to have been dismantled, in accordance with the cautious Scottish policy of leaving no strong places for an enemy to occupy; and once, in the reign of the third English Edward, when his kinsman, the Count of Namur, landed a small force of knights and men-at-arms on the coast, and was badly beaten on the Burrough Muir, then an open plain to the south of the town, the survivors took refuge behind the broken walls of the Castle, and were able to make terms of honourable capitulation.

With the Stuarts, as has been already noted, the Castle became a royal residence; but the irksomeness of its steep and isolated security led the monarch to prefer, in peaceful times, the shelter of the royal Abbey of Holyrood.

In its present aspect Holyrood is bare and desolate enough; a palace amid the slums, a gloomy block of masonry in an arid desert of gravel, overpowered by the mass of hill and crag behind it, with which, from no point of view, it can be brought gracefully to compare, while the ruined fragment of the old Abbey church, incongruously attached to the palace of Charles the Second's days, heightens the feeling of desolation, without imparting the grace and sentiment of antiquity.

But by great good fortune—with much that is heavy and uninteresting—the very best part of the earlier palace has been preserved—the north-west tower of James the Fifth's building, with its extinguisher-turrets, the very tower that is consecrated, if that is the word, to the memory of Queen Mary Stuart. Of the old Abbey, its monks and abbots, and the story of its miraculous foundation, there is little to be said. The spectres that haunt the place are not those of the religious, whose cloisters and cells disappeared long ago, burnt by English raiders, or levelled to form the foundations of the royal palace. Instead of these we have murdered Rizzio, pierced with a hundred dagger thrusts; the handsome and fatuous Darnley; and Mary herself with her sweet beguiling face.

Between the Abbey and the Castle the way is direct enough, in one continuous street of tall and gloomy houses, festooned with the garments of the dwellers in the crowded flats—no longer so savoury as when Doctor Johnson declared to Boswell, on his progress to his lodgings in the night, that he smelt his countrymen in the dark, but still strongly flavoured with whisky and salt herrings.

First there is the Canongate, which takes its name from the canons of Holyrood, who had a charter to build a town of their own here, between the Abbey and the King's town, with the fine dark old Canon-gate Tolbooth, which, with its outside stair and pepperbox turrets, may give us a notion of the old Tolbooth of Edinburgh, the heart of Midlothian, now destroyed. Then there is old Q.'s mansion on the left, now a house of refuge, and where the High Street begins, is John Knox's house, a genuine relic of the great Reformer—quaint, dark, and dirty-looking without, haunted by old beggar women who claim an acquaintance with the passing stranger, and cozen him out of bawbees.

The Castle gun, which peals out at one o'clock, brings a fine waft of memories

with its roar. We may fancy that we hear the bells ringing backwards and the town drums beating the "rappel," as Bonnie Dundee rode up the street from the Parliament House, and away by the West Bow to raise the Highlands for King James; what time he climbed the rock to the postern gate, for some last pregnant words with Gordon, the Cock of the North, who held the Castle for royal James, while all the town below were shouting for William and Mary. Or we may recall the last notes of angry thunder from the Castle guns as Bonnie Prince Charlie held his Court at Holyrood, and all the fair Jacobite dames thronged to the long-deserted saloons as to a bridal—while, all the time, the Castle roared out lustily for King George.

With the crown of the steep, we come to St. Giles's Church, described, some half century ago, by Robert Chambers, in his "Picture of Scotland," as "a large, though ill-favoured building;" but now, thanks to the brother—we shall come presently to the familiar sign—restored, as well as builders and masons can restore a thing that is past, to the likeness of former days, when its aisles echoed to the tread of mail-clad warriors, and its purlieus were as often as not the scene of fierce cutting and slashing; when lords, and knights, and lairds shouldered each other in the narrow streets; and swords flew out, and pistol shots echoed sharply; and shutters flew up and doors were bolted and barred, as the burghers quickly realised that a fight was going on.

There are some yet living, who may remember to have seen the great Sir Walter striding up the street, with bright blue eye and jovial presence. We are almost as far from his day now as he was from the time of Prince Charlie and the '45; and with his presence what memories revive of the old literary world of Edinburgh—of the solid, hard-headed historians and thinkers, first of all, of David Hume, and Adam Smith, and Dugald Stewart; of the poets, too, Allan Ramsay and Fergusson; and, far above them all, Robert Burns, with his dark, vivid face; with Tom Campbell and John Leyden, to keep up the succession into the Augustan Age of Edinburgh, when Scott was busy in his little den in Castle Street, in that honest bow-fronted house, and Christopher North and the Ettrick Shepherd might be seen consorting together any day; when high jinks went on in the taverns, and

high jokes in the clubs, and high talk in the snug coteries of the New Town. When, too, there were liberal publishers to pay the scores, and enterprising, too enterprising, publishers to bring out the rising author, when the last Scotch novel was eagerly looked for at all the libraries and bought by all the booksellers, and those who hung upon the skirts of the great wizard found abundant nourishment from the crumbs that fell from his table. Where are the jolly lairds, who bought the books and subscribed for the poems, and loved good literature as they loved good wine, and the high dames and noble spinsters who were so proud and yet so accessible, so highly bred and yet so original, and who sat for their portraits to the rising novelists with perfect naiveté and unconcern? And then the stern and awful critics in the background—the Scotch reviewers—fiercely gentle even to those of their own kin, but to outsiders how implacable.

It is going a long way back to talk of the sixteenth century, but assuredly the beginning of literary Edinburgh was when the courts of law which had long followed the King in vagrant fashion about the country, were fixed and concentrated in Edinburgh. There had been some wonderful law-givers in the old days, such as Crichton frae Crichton Peel—the Chancellor of James the Second's young days—not an admirable Crichton by any means, although he may have been an ancestor of that prodigy, but a man as careless of blood-spilling, in the way of equity and justice, as any grim Douglas or cruel Hepburn. It was Crichton who was the author of the celebrated black dinner in Edinburgh Castle, about which there is an old and happily unfulfilled malediction in rhyme:

Edinburgh Castle, town and tower,
God grant ye sinke for sinne,
And that even for the black dinner
Earl Douglas gat therein.

That was the dinner of the black bull's head, it will be remembered, when young Earl Douglas and his brother were dragged from the hospitable board and beheaded in sight of their royal host.

But that kind of jurisprudence passed away when the courts of law were settled in Edinburgh, and a body of practitioners arose skilled in civil law, and interested in seeing that technical justice was done. And when the Royal Court was removed to England, the courts of law waxed even more powerful and important; while the

nobility and gentry, deprived by the strong arm of Government of the opportunity of fighting out their constant disputes and quarrels, turned to the equally fascinating, if more ruinous sport of litigation. The influence and example of French jurisprudence and procedure was powerful among the Scotch lawyers; their manners too were leavened with the old-fashioned French courtesy, and with an amenity that looked as much to the breeding—and liberality—of the litigants, as to the mere dry facts and legal aspects of the case. In the mutual relationship of the nobility of the sword and the robe, arose a school of high ceremony and politeness. Poetry and the belles lettres were cultivated—an apt quotation, or a felicitous epigram, was worth as much as a powerful argument. Thus was laid the foundation of a society polished and serene, undisturbed by the rush for wealth, or the competition for mere political distinction. And while in England the skilful but sterile policy of Walpole extinguished, as far as it was able, all the literary lights of the world of law and politics, and the influence of the Court of the Georges was even more withering and depressing; in far-off Edinburgh, apart from the roar of venal politicians and the turmoil of an illiterate Court, the stars of literary brightness rose in a clear, unclouded horizon.

But we must not forget that although Edinburgh city forms the most important part of Midlothian, yet there are other parts of the county which have their own annals and associations. There is Craigmillar Castle, for instance, three miles south of Edinburgh, which was often occupied by Queen Mary, and where, it is said, the murder of Darnley by the then original method of blowing him up by gunpowder, was finally decided upon and arranged. One trace of the Queen's former residence at the Castle is preserved in the name of an adjoining hamlet where the Queen's French Guards were constantly stationed, and which received in consequence the name of Petty France. The ruins are of a half-fortified mansion of the sixteenth century, for the feudal castle which once occupied the site was burnt by the English—blown up, perhaps, for burning had little effect upon the stout walls of ancient castles—but anyhow, the ground was cleared for the new castle, now in its turn a ruin. There exists a famous quarry on the north side of the castle from which, according to tradition, the stone was raised to build Edinburgh

Castle so long ago as the time of the Picts, when wheeled carriages being unknown to that primitive people, they formed line all along the way and handed the stones from one to the other, as in shot drill—a story this, by the way, which is told of more than one old castle.

Then we have Merchistoun and the weather-beaten tower, where John Napier, whose fame is connected with logarithms, was born some time in the sixteenth century. Newbattle Abbey too, though a modern house, has an interesting connection with the line that possesses it—the last Abbot of Newbattle, a lay abbot no doubt, being the founder of the family, his son, Mark Ker, having procured that the abbacy should be converted into a temporal lordship.

The first Lady Ker, by-the-way, could not very well have been called a Lady Abbess, as she had no fewer than thirty-one children, and had the reputation of being a most powerful witch, circumstances that may have made her lord regret that he had not lived in a former age.

There is Dalhousie Castle too, which recalls the Sir Alexander Ramsay of Bruce's days, the marks of whose powerful sword were long pointed out in a riven stone between Barrough Muir and Edinburgh Castle, and who was inhumanly murdered by the Knight of Liddesdale.

Nor should Pinkie House be forgotten, a fine old manor that once was the country seat of the royal Abbey of Dunfermline, although the house itself is of past Reformation times. A house that had a kind of halo about it in Jacobite memories, as Prince Charles slept there on the night after his victory at Prestonpans.

And then we come to Musselburgh Links, where racing seems to have been indigenous, but notable too for another kind of meeting, when twenty thousand Covenanters lined the moors from Musselburgh to Leith, and six hundred ministers in Geneva gowns and bands, are reported to have stood upon one hill; all with their faces towards the envoy of King Charles the First, the Marquis of Hamilton, who was charged to see if he could not bring the Covenanters to some accommodation. Cromwell, too, lay for a time encamped on Musselburgh Links, and the hole that was made to receive his tent is still shown by the people of the neighbourhood.

But, except for occasional nooks here and there, the general surface of Midlothian apart from Edinburgh is not interesting.

It abounds in coal-mines, in quarries, and kilns, so that there is all the pleasure of surprise and contrast when the beautiful dell of the Esk is reached, with Roslyn Castle and Chapel on its brink, and classic Hawthornden in close proximity. The marvellous detail of the interior of Roslyn Chapel is well known, with its 'prentice pillar beautifully wreathed in sculptured foliage; and the story of the master mason, who journeyed to Rome to find out the way to do it, and, seeing on his return that the 'prentice had accomplished the task unaided much better than his master could have done with all his acquired knowledge, hit the poor youth on the head with his mallet, and so emancipated him from any further servitude.

As for Hawthornden and its memories of William Drummond, and his friend and guest Ben Jonson, are they not familiar to the reading public as household words? But the traditional report of their meeting has a stamp of reality about it—the utterance of the somewhat pompous author, who does not forget that he is also a worshipful laird, contrasted with the reticence of the professional scribe who has tramped on foot from Westminster to Scotland.

DRUMMOND *loq.* : Welcome, welcome, Royal Ben !
JONSON replies : Thankye, thankye, Hawthornden.

Unhappily, Royal Ben's account of the interview is not forthcoming, nor the notes that he took on his long but interesting tramp.

CHARMS, OMENS, AND ANCIENT QUACKERIES.

IN THREE PARTS. PART I.

PERHAPS the least harmful of the useless, and (as they now seem to us) ridiculous practices employed in former times for the cure of diseases was that of mumbling a certain formula of words believed to constitute an all-powerful charm to remove certain physical ailments.

Mr. Pepys has preserved for us in his "Diary" a few unique specimens of these charms. It must not, however, be for one moment supposed that the diarist was himself a believer in the efficacy of these charms—indeed, there is every reason for believing that he was not—although, even in the time of Charles the Second, the medical profession was characterised by some very queer usages. To give an illustration, Mr. Pepys records, in dilating upon Her Majesty's illness, that

"she had to be shaved, and pigeons put to her feet." The first charm to which Mr. Pepys refers is in Latin, and was employed in stanching blood :

Blood remain in thee,
As Christ was in Himself;
Blood remain in thy vein,
As Christ in his own suffering;
Blood remain fixed,
As Christ, when He was crucified.

The next in order was one to be applied for the purpose of extracting a thorn :

Jesus, that was of a Virgin borne,
Was prickled bothe with naile and thorne;
It neither wealed, nor belled, nor rankled, nor boned;
In the name of Jesus, no more shall this.

Here is another and somewhat improved charm for the cure of the selfsame accident :

Christ was of a Virgin borne,
And he was prickled with a thorne,
And it did neither bell nor swell,
And I trust in Jesus this never will.

The formula to be gone through for the cure of cramp was quite as simple. All that it was necessary for the patient to do was to repeat these words :

Cramp, be thou painless,
As Our Lady was stainless,
When she bore Jesus.

For a burn, burning or scalding, no matter how severe, the patient was recommended to recite these words :

There came three angels out of the East,
The one brought fire, the other brought frost;
Out fire, in frost,
In the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.

For the cure of a person bewitched or overlooked, it was necessary that the blood of the one that had bewitched or overlooked him or her should be "drawn," after which the afflicted person would be restored to his accustomed health. Few cures for this malady were of more common belief a hundred years ago, and, strange to say, in some remote parts of the country it still exists. Notably is this the case in Dorsetshire, where only recently a woman was very properly punished by the law for violently attacking a next-door neighbour, in order that the former might draw blood, on the ground that the old woman had bewitched her daughter, a confirmed invalid. The old woman, who was a most inoffensive person, was in her garden when she was attacked, and the blood was drawn by a darning-needle being driven several times into her hands and arms.

The belief in the power of wise men and women to cure ailments by means of

charms is very common in Wales, even to the present day. A very frequently applied charm for the cure of epilepsy, among the lower orders about London and particularly in Essex, was to cut the tip off a black cat's tail, in order to get from it three drops of blood, which were to be taken in a teaspoonful of milk from a woman's breast, and repeated three times successively. Another cure was for the patient to creep head foremost down three flights of stairs, three times each day for three days successively; three being the root of the magic number nine.

Here is a charm that was actually tried in the Year of Grace, 1886, in Devonshire. A young woman, living in the neighbourhood of Holsworthy, having for some considerable time been subject to periodical fits of illness, endeavoured to effect a cure by attending at the afternoon service at the parish church, accompanied by thirty young men, her near neighbours. Service over, she sat in the porch of the church, and each of the young men, as they passed out in succession, dropped a penny into her lap, but the last, instead of a penny, gave her half-a-crown, taking from her the twenty-nine pennies which she had already received. With this half-crown in her hand, she walked three times round the Communion Table, and afterwards had the coin made into a ring, by the wearing of which she believed she should recover her health.

Dr. Harvey has left on record the following recipe, as a preventive against consumption and hectic fevers:

"Take half-a-pound of garden snails with their shells, especially those that are about vines; wash them well with water and a little salt; then wash them once or twice more with fair water, to wash off the salt; then bruise them with their shells to a mash in a stone mortar. Add to them ground ivy, speedwell, lungwort, scabious, burnet, colt's foot, and nettle tops, of each a handful; English liquors, half an ounce; dates, stoned, twelve in number; of the four great cold seeds, of each one dram and a half; saffron, a scruple. Put them with the snails in a new glazed pipkin, or tin coffee pot, which is better, and pour on them a quart of spring water; fasten the cover close to the pipkin, by pasting round it a quantity of dough. Set the pipkin in a kettle of hot water over the fire; let it stand therein for twelve hours, then strain it and press out the liquor, dissolving into it, while it is warm, a quarter of a pound

of clarified honey. Put it into glass bottles and keep in a cellar."

In Scotland, nettles and southernwood, or, as it is called, muggins or mugwort, are held good for the cure of consumption. Dr. Robert Chambers says: "The funeral of a young woman was passing on the high road on the margin of the Firth of Clyde, above Port Glasgow, when a mermaid raised her head above the water, and in slow, admonitory tones uttered the following words:

If they wad drink nettles in March,
And eat muggins in May,
Sae mony braw maidens
Wadna gang to the clay!"

As may readily be surmised, muggins or mugwort and a decoction of nettles form a favourite prescription for consumption among the common people.

A great deal more importance was attached by our ancestors to the value of culinary preparations than is now attached by us. Here is, for instance, a recipe for a broth or callis, that was guaranteed to cure one far gone in the worst stages of consumption, if daily taken fasting and on going to bed:

"You take a young cock, or a capon; cut him in quarters and bruise all his bones; then take the root of fennel, parsley, and hickory, violet leaves and borage. Put him into an earthen pot for stewing meats in, and between every quarter lay some of the roots and herbs, corianders, whole mace, anise seeds, liquorice scraped and sliced, so filling up the pot. Then put in half a pint of rose-water, a quart or more of white wine, two or three dates made clean and cut in pieces, a few prunes and raisins of the sun—and if you put in certain pieces of gold it will be the better, and they never the worse—and so cover it close, and stop it with dough, and set the pot in seething water, and let it seethe gently for the space of twelve hours, with a good fire kept still under the brass pot that it standeth in, and the pot kept with liquor so long. When it hath stilled so many hours take out the earthen pot, open it, strain out the broth into some clean vessel, and give some to the sick person morning and evening, as I said, warmed and spiced, as best pleaseth the taste."

It is surprising to find how many people yet believe that warts may be charmed away. The processes are fairly well known and very simple, but the connection between the process and the result is very misty. An old woman is generally the

"charmer," and mutters some outlandish gibberish, repeats the Lord's Prayer backwards or something equally as absurd, and gives the victim of the warts a piece of stick. This is to be thrown away or burned, and, as it decays, the warts disappear. Another charm, "equally as efficacious," is to spit on the warts for nine mornings in succession before breaking the fast, and on the tenth all traces of them will have disappeared.

It is generally believed by rustics and superstitious persons that the seventh son born of one mother, without a daughter coming in between, is a "natural doctor," having the power to cure several diseases without the aid of medicines, and to tell the whereabouts of stray cattle or stolen property.

If the seventh son be likewise the son of a seventh son, his powers are little short of miraculous. In Cornwall, the miners believe that such an one can cure the King's Evil by a simple touch, though the process is usually for the miracle-worker to stroke the part affected three times, to blow upon it three times, to repeat a form of words, and to give a perforated can or some other object to be worn as an amulet. In Ireland, the lucky son was credited with prophetic, in addition to healing power; while in Scotland, the seventh daughter of a seventh daughter is said to be gifted with second sight as well as healing and prophecy.

As lately as one hundred years ago the following was prescribed by "wise women," and worn round the neck, as an infallible charm for the cure of toothache:

Mars, hur, abursa, abarse,
Jesus Christ for Mary's sake,
Take away this toothache.

This triplet charm was written on paper, enclosed in a clew or bag, and worn round the neck. In some parts of the country it was believed that when the spell was burned the toothache would vanish. In Devonshire, and in some parts of Scotland, a tooth taken from a skull is worn round the neck as a charm against disease of the teeth; in Ireland, rustics afflicted with this annoying pain rise early, take a sharp-pointed stick and push it with the afflicted tooth into the soil of a newly-made grave. As lately as the time of the first George, a splinter from a gibbet upon which some notorious criminal had swung, or, better still, was yet swinging, was accounted a certain specific against the toothache. In Devonshire, again, and many other parts of

the country, the parings of the toe-nails cut on Good Friday morning used to be worn round the neck to charm away toothache; while in Cornwall it is believed that relief can be obtained by biting away, close to the ground, the first fern of spring maidenhair spleenwort, if possible, though common bracken will do just as well. In Norfolk and Lincolnshire it was customary to make a poultice of horseradish, and, if the tooth which ached was on the left side, the poultice was placed round the right wrist, and vice versa. The author of this specific is said to have been Clause Patch, the celebrated English Gipsy King. In the Cathedral of Cologne is the holy tooth of Saint Apollonia, and, on that saint's day, it is extremely difficult to get near the case in which the relic is kept, on account of the crowd of toothaching devotees, of all ages and sexes, who press forward for the purpose of kissing the preserved molar, and by faith relieving their pain. In some parts of North Russia school-children, before the duties of the day commence, are ranged in lines, and not only hands and finger-nails, but the condition of their teeth are also carefully inspected. Woe betide any urchin whose molars are then found to be discoloured! This precaution notwithstanding, sound teeth are considered a boon worth praying for by the Russian, and as he kisses the portal of the church door, he exclaims: "Holy Sergius, as this stone is firm and sound and strong, so grant my teeth may be."

The following strange case occurred during the time that women were prosecuted in England for witchcraft. An eminent Judge was travelling his circuit, when an old woman was brought before him on a charge of having held a spell or charm to cure dimness of sight. Her charm consisted of hanging a "clew" of yarn round the neck of the patient; and marvellous things were told by the witnesses of the cures which this spell had performed on patients who were supposed to have been far beyond the reach of ordinary medicine. The only defence made by the poor woman to the charge, which involved one of witchcraft, was a protestation that if there was any witchcraft in the ball of yarn she was not aware of it. The clew was given to her, she said, thirty years before, by a young Oxford student, for the cure of one of her own family, who having used it with advantage, she had seen no harm in lending it for the relief of others who laboured under a similar infirmity, or in accepting a

small gratuity for doing so. Her defence was little heeded by the jury; but the Judge appeared to be very much agitated by the story. He asked the woman where she resided when she obtained possession of this valuable relic. She gave the name of the village in which she had in former times kept an alehouse. The Judge then looked at the clew very earnestly, and at length addressed the jury in these terms: "Gentlemen, we are on the point of committing a great injustice to this poor old woman, and, to prevent it, I must publicly confess a piece of early folly which does me no honour. At the time this poor creature speaks of I was at college, leading an idle and careless life, which, had I not been given grace to correct, must have made it highly improbable that ever I should have attained my present situation. I chanced to remain for a day and a night in this woman's alehouse, without having money to discharge my reckoning. Not knowing what to do, and, seeing her much occupied with a child who was suffering from weak eyes, I had the meanness to pretend that I could write out a spell that would mend her daughter's sight, if she would accept it instead of her bill. The ignorant woman readily agreed, and I scrawled some figures on a piece of parchment, and added two lines of nonsensical doggerel, in ridicule of her credulity, and caused her to make it up in the "clew" which has so nearly cost her her life. To prove the truth of it, let the yarn be unwound, and you may then judge of the efficacy of the spell." The clew was unwound, when the couplet mentioned by the Judge was found in it on a piece of parchment. The jury were satisfied, and the poor woman was discharged.

In Scotland a daisy was, and in some parts still is, regarded as a healing plant. If a sick man can only put his foot on a fully expanded daisy, he has hopes of recovery; just as in other parts some mountain spring or quiet stream is supposed to possess magical powers. Faith, no doubt, has a good deal to do with the cure, and the thought that touching any green object would effect a cure would do much to accomplish the same. It is further believed that if the farmer kneels down and bites off the first daisy of spring a plentiful crop will be his reward; and, though somewhat ludicrous, it is a common occurrence in places to see sturdy and otherwise sensible sons of the soil thus kneeling down and kissing mother earth.

Arnold de Villeneuve, who flourished in the thirteenth century, is said, according to Dr. Mackay, to have left the following recipe for ensuring a length of years considerably surpassing the period which is generally supposed to be green old age. A person thus wishful to prolong his life must rub himself two or three times a week with the juice of marrow or cassia. Every night, on going to bed, he must place on his head a plaster composed of a certain quantity of Oriental saffron, red rose leaves, sandal-wood, aloes, and amber, liquefied in oil of roses and the best white wax. In the morning he must take it off, and enclose it carefully in a leaden box until the next night, when it must be again applied. If he be of a sanguine temperament, he is to take sixteen chickens; if phlegmatic, twenty-five; and if melancholy, thirty. These he is to put in a yard where the air and water are pure. Upon these he is to feed, eating one a day. But these chickens are to be fattened in a peculiar way, which will impregnate their flesh with the qualities which are to produce longevity to the eater. Being deprived of all other nourishment till they are almost dying of hunger, they are to be fed on a broth made of serpents and vinegar, thickened with wheat and bran. After two months of such diet they will be fit for the intending Methuselah's table, and are to be washed down with copious draughts of good hock or claret.

There is the hen that is reputed in fairy tales to have laid golden eggs as fast as ever she was required; and there is the black hen of superstition that brings a golden harvest to its possessor. Both are unlike as can be. The story of the black hen, which discloses an infallible recipe for the rapid accumulation of an immense fortune, runs thus:

Take a young black hen, neither too young nor too old, at eleven o'clock at night, neither before nor after; do not make it scream or squeak on any account; hold it tight, but do not choke it, and with it go to any spot where two roads meet. When you hear the mystic hour of midnight strike, make a circle on the ground with a cypress wand; stand in the middle of it—the circle, not the wand—cut the hen in two, and say these mystic words three times:

Eloim, Essaim, Shessaim,
Kiam, Koam, Keeam,
Fugativi et appellavi.

Immediately turn to the east and kneel down and pray. When your prayer is

over utter the great summons, and lo! and behold you the great spirit will forthwith make his appearance, clothed in a scarlet-laced coat, yellow vest, and green pantaloons, prepared to do your bidding. In order that the wrong person may not receive the commands, I should add that he who will obey has a dog's head, ass's ears, and horns and hoofs. He will at once say, "What wantest thou?" and his voice will sound like double-distilled thunder. You have then only to speak, to become rich, mighty, and honoured. Due precaution, however, is essentially necessary; the one who calls up the spirit or fiend must be in a state of grace, or, instead of obeying, the spirit of the fiend will himself demand obedience, and will have it too. The experiment, all things considered, is a risky one for timid people to attempt.

The hand of glory is a Russian superstition. In this semi-barbarous land there exists a deeply-rooted belief that wonderful powers are possessed by the owner of the hand of a man who has been executed. It must, however, be a left hand. After obtaining possession of the hand it must be salted, dried in the sun, and then baked. In it must be put a candle made of Lapland sesame and virgin wax. It may then be lit, and in whatever place the fortunate owner may enter people remain spell-bound and motionless, and you can do just what your fancy dictates.

Another story tells how a candle made of grease from human flesh will throw out sparks when near hidden treasure, and go out when close to the treasure. In our own country, in the time of Charles the Second, ten guineas was thought a small price for the hand of a person who had been executed. The scrofula could be cured by the patient merely being rubbed by one of these horrible relics; and many other virtues were supposed to be attached to them. In the Roman Catholic chapel at Ashton, in Mansfield, there was formerly, if not now, a dead or holy hand, much treasured as a relic, and believed in for its wonderful power to cure. It belonged to a certain Father Arrowsmith, who was executed at Lancaster in the year 1628. His right hand was cut off after death by one of his friends, and preserved for many years in Bryn Hall, after which it was sent to Ashton. Many tales are recorded of the marvellous cures this "holy" relic has wrought. It was supposed to cure tumours, which were rubbed by it, and in 1872 a paralysed person walked many miles in

order to try its efficacy, but was found on the way too exhausted to proceed.

In the county of Suffolk, and I dare say elsewhere, an extraordinary superstition with regard to the efficacy of sacramental wine exists; cures, it is alleged, having been effected through its instrumentality when all other means had failed. It is not long since that a clergyman was applied to by a nurse, on behalf of a baby who would not cease crying, for some such wine. The nurse evidently believed the child to be bewitched, while the clergyman considered that it suffered from flatulence. However, the wine was given, and as no second application was made, negative evidence was afforded that a cure may have been worked by its means.

LOST IN THE VALLEY.

By the Author of "Driven of the Wind," etc.

A STORY IN SIXTEEN CHAPTERS.

CHAPTER V.

IN the meantime, happily ignorant of the hostility he was incurring, Maurice was enjoying to the full his last hours in Paris. Eveline had arranged that he should go for a last drive in the Bois with her; then she was to leave him at the house of some friends with whom he was going to dine.

"You must see me again to-night to say good-bye," she said, as they drove slowly in an open carriage round the lake.

"How can I?" he asked. "You are going to the Opera with Mrs. O'Hara, and the Devignes will be sure to keep me till late, as they are going to have singing and recitations in my honour to-night."

"Well, we shall probably both be home at the same time. If you are back before me, I will leave orders with Hélène to show you to the little salon. There you will find the cosiest wood fire, and you may dip into Mudie's latest consignment and smoke cigarettes till I come. It will be our last chance of a quiet talk, for, at nine to-morrow morning I shall lose you; and one is so stupid at nine in the morning; one cannot even say one is sorry to lose a dear, dear friend."

Her voice broke a little at the last words.

"There, now I am going to cry in the Bois, before everyone," she said, smiling at him through a mist of tears. "You will come, will you not?"

"Of course I will," he answered. "Apart

from you yourself I am so fond of that dear little salon, that I am heartbroken at the thought of leaving it. I know I shall begin pulling our odious drawing-room at The Grange about the moment I get there, endeavouring to infuse into its unloveliness something of the Oriental charm of your room. We are all crewel-work and conventionality at home."

"I should like to see your home," she said dreamily.

"No, you would not, I assure you. Our drawing-room chairs would set your teeth on edge. And you would look, oh! so out of place there!"

Eveline looked hurt.

"But I was not always rich," she persisted. "Years ago, before my marriage, I was very poor, dependent on my stepfather's charity, and he was mean. I had many changes of fortune during my married life too——" she stopped short.

Maurice had often before noticed her reluctance to allude to any phase of her former experience. But there was one point on which his curiosity could no longer be restrained.

"Would you mind telling me your married name?" he asked.

She looked at him quickly, an expression almost of alarm crossing her face. Then she laughed in rather a constrained manner.

"Of course I thought you knew," she said. "My husband's death was such a shock to me that I never even mention my old name. He was the Count of Montecalvo."

"How strange!" exclaimed Maurice. "I have met a gentleman of that name twice at Madame De Vaux's soirées. A tall man with a long black beard and moustache. Surely he is some relative of yours, and would know you?"

"He was my husband's brother," said Eveline; "but, as you leave Paris to-night, you will not meet him again."

"By Jove, I shall though!" exclaimed Maurice, as his eyes strayed among the well-dressed crowd thronging the park, "for there he is."

"Where? I don't see him. The sun is in my eyes," said Eveline, hastily opening her parasol, and letting its shade effectually conceal her face.

"He is looking this way," said Maurice, raising his hat as a handsome dark Italian, with long black beard and moustache, rode past their carriage. The Count of Montecalvo returned his salute. Then, impelled

by a fashionable idler's instinct to see the face of any woman who is trying to conceal it, he reined in his horse a moment, by which manœuvre he caught a sudden view of the delicate profile—ashen-white at this moment—of Eveline Douglas.

Maurice, looking at him, saw him start, change colour, and frown heavily, then whip up his horse and hurry past the carriage.

He looked at Eveline in surprise. Was this the greeting that she expected from her brother-in-law? There was no look of surprise or dismay on her face, only the same hopeless, hunted expression which he had seen there once before, when Janet Douglas insulted her at Mrs. O'Hara's. She was staring straight before her with eyes that saw nothing, and her gloved hand, when he touched it, was cold as death.

"Mrs. Douglas, my dear Mrs. Douglas, are you ill? Shall I tell the coachman to drive you home?"

"No, no, it is nothing," she said, forcing herself to smile; "only the sight of that man, whom I have not seen since my husband's death, was—was painful to me. His family will not receive me, because they always thought it a *mésalliance*, being very proud, you see."

"Proud!" he echoed; "they ought to have been proud of you. You look every inch a Countess, a Queen!"

She turned her face, in its pale beauty, towards him, a smile of the tenderest gratitude filling her eyes.

"Thank you, Maurice," she said simply.

She was silent again until Maurice's destination was nearly reached; then, gently laying her hand on his, she said:

"Try to think of me always well. You will hear many things against me, I dare say, some true, some false. I have done very little good in my life, and a great deal of harm. But at least I can say this: that the good was intentional, and the harm was not."

"I shall always think of you as I know you," he answered, pressing her hand between both his, "my ideal of all that is sweet, and beautiful, and good."

For answer she only sighed, and, with a reminder that if he returned first he was to wait for her, she left him at the door of his friend's house.

The incidents of the day and the thought of his coming farewell interview with her, had combined to plunge him into a nervous, excited, restless state, most unusual to him. He was absent-minded and

silent during dinner; he could think of nothing but Eveline Douglas; of her strange half-confidences; of the lingering tenderness with which she held his hand in meeting and parting with him; of her great, half-veiled eyes; of her delicious voice. The whole world, according to her account, seemed in a conspiracy against her, and yet she seemed the last woman alive, with her gentleness and evenness of temper, to provoke dislike. But de Villars's insolent assurance, Miss Douglas's violent abuse, and the cold hatred that flashed into her brother-in-law's face at sight of her, all recurred to his mind with irritating persistency.

He was sorry that Dr. Grantley had not yet returned to town, as he would have liked to question him concerning the unaccountable animosity, which so many people seemed to cherish against his beautiful friend. The O'Haras were full of her praises, but they never volunteered any information as to her former career. Maurice was certain it was a long record of undeserved suffering, but he would have liked to know the particulars, that he might boldly champion her cause against her detractors whenever he should meet them.

At Madame Devigne's he was asked who was the lovely woman he had been seen with in the Bois, and he found himself thinking, as he stated it was an English widow lady, how very little more he really knew about her.

Would she tell him anything more to-night, he wondered, at that farewell interview which, he now determined, should be as long as possible? And how would she say good-bye? Would she kiss him? She might well do so, in the semi-motherly fashion in which she treated him. He was glad he had never deceived her with regard to his age. Thinking he was seventeen, she would be more likely to press those perfect lips to his cheek as she said good-bye. Not a permanent good-bye. He would write to her, prepare his mother to receive her on a visit, or, better still, would himself return to Paris next Easter—Paris was so extremely nice at Easter. These thoughts filling his mind, rendered his conversation, never of the most brilliant order, even less so than usual this evening. But he made up for his deficiencies by singing "Good-bye" later on, in a manner that affected his hearers more than his singing had ever done before.

As early as possible he excused himself

on the plea of packing, and by half-past ten he was in a fiacre on his way back to the Boulevard Haussmann. Running lightly up the marble staircase to the second floor, he found, as he expected, that Eveline had not yet returned. Hélène, however, smiled at him, and showed him into the inner salon, radiant with light from the ruby-coloured hanging lamps, and the ruddy, scented logs, crackling in the fireplace—for the evenings were growing cold, just cold enough for a man fully to appreciate the luxurious, perfumed warmth of this room.

He flung himself into a low armchair, and, closing his eyes, listened to the hissing of the firewood, and the splash of the fountain.

The kitten—her pet white kitten—came and rubbed itself against his knee. Taking it up tenderly, he pressed his cheek against its fur, and kissed it as he had sometimes seen her do. She would be here very soon, sweeping across the velvety carpet in her trailing silk gown, filling the room with her beauty, rivalling the falling water with the melody of her voice. What would she wear? This was always a most exciting question with him. She was like a whole gallery of beautiful pictures, in her constant changes of rich and harmonious dresses. He began to roam about the room, taking a farewell of all her pretty things—pictures, china, curiosities. In an open cabinet, at the back of an ivory casket, he did not remember to have been shown. Was it a portrait of her? He had never seen one; so, taking it out, he opened it eagerly.

It was a small painting, on ivory, of two young men, one of whom he guessed, by his resemblance to the Count of Montecalvo, to be Eveline's husband.

It was a bad face, Maurice decided, as he held the picture to the light. Distinctly handsome, of a purely Italian type, with bold, black-fringed eyes, and a short, dark beard and moustache that did not conceal the cruel, sensual mouth. "Clever and bad," Maurice thought, as he turned his attention to the face of the other man. A foreign type again, but fairer, younger, weaker, handsomer still, with an indolent smile playing round the half-shut eyes and uncertain mouth. The picture was interesting, in any case, from the contrast between the two faces; the one imperious and evil, the other languid and weak-minded in expression. They were half-length portraits, and the two stood there,

the younger with his arm affectionately thrown round the other's neck. A memory of a long dead and gone friendship, and possibly of many other things concerning which at this moment Maurice was ignorant.

The clock, a dainty toy set in a porcelain frame, struck eleven as he stood looking at the miniature. Almost at the same moment he heard a sound in the next room. The intervening door was ajar. He had left it so, that he might hear Eveline arrive. The door was entirely hidden on the other side by the blue-grey silk curtains draped across it.

It was a man's step, Maurice felt certain. Was it Pierre? But why should Pierre creep about in that stealthy fashion? After a few seconds the noise ceased, and, as Maurice was on the point of throwing open the intervening door to make sure that it was not a thief concealing himself there, he heard a ring at the outer door, and voices in the hall.

It was Eveline returning from the Opera. He heard her enter the salon, and give an order to Hélène, then dismiss her with her opera-cloak. He could hear the sweep of her dress as she approached the door of the room where he stood. Then suddenly she stopped short with a smothered cry.

"M. de Villars, you here?" she exclaimed. "How dare you enter my rooms at this time?"

Maurice could hear her make a sudden movement, probably to the bell. Then she stopped again, as if her action had been impeded.

"Ange adorée!" exclaimed the Marquis, in a passionate whisper. "I saw you at the Opera, and left before you. I entered while your maid was flirting with the valet upstairs. She had left the door open. I saw my chance, and took it. Ah, do not repulse me! You cannot! You must not! Perfidy, will you kill me with your coldness, your cruelty? And all for what? For an insignificant schoolboy who cannot appreciate you, cannot worship you as I do."

"M. de Villars," said Eveline, in a cold, hard voice. "Shall I ring, or will you avoid a scandal, and go now?"

"No, upon my soul, I will not! Eveline, I know too much about you for you to dare to treat me in this way. If I leave you now, I swear to you I will go straight to M. Wilde, and tell him everything."

"And do you think you are going the right way to win my affection by incessantly forcing your society upon me, by wearying me with your threats, and by striving to alienate the only friend I have?" she asked bitterly. "Do you consider your conduct is that of a gentleman? Do you see nothing cowardly in thus persecuting a lonely and unhappy woman with open threats and covert insults? Do you think you are likely thus to endear yourself to me? Mr. Wilde is not, will never be, my lover; but if he were, if he was dearer to me than anything in this world, I could not love him more than I detest you. Now go."

Both Eveline and her companion spoke in French, and so low and rapidly that Maurice could not distinguish what they were saying. He was extremely uncomfortable at being thus an unintentional eavesdropper. But he knew that Eveline at least was aware of his presence near, and that, if she wanted him, she had only to call him to her. He drew nearer to the door as he heard her last words.

"Ah! but you are sublime when you are excited," he heard the Marquis say. "I had rather you should hate me than look at me like a marble statue. Eveline, you are beautiful as an angel. Your hatred, your contempt, what are they to me? Anger makes you only more lovely, more irresistible. And I know how to change your feelings to me. No—you shall not ring."

He stopped. Maurice heard the Countess make a rapid movement forward, then stop suddenly, as if intercepted.

Throwing aside the portière, the young Englishman entered the room just in time to see the Marquis catch her in his arms, and to hear her startled cry:

"Maurice!"

Before M. de Villars had seen him, Maurice had seized him by the shoulder, and pushed him aside with more strength than he had thought himself capable of. Then, holding aside the curtains from the door of the room he had just left with one hand, he offered the other to Eveline with grave politeness.

She looked at him a moment, hesitating; then she let him lead her in silence to the adjoining room.

"Stay here, Madame," was all he said. Then, closing the door, he stood with his back to it, facing the Marquis.

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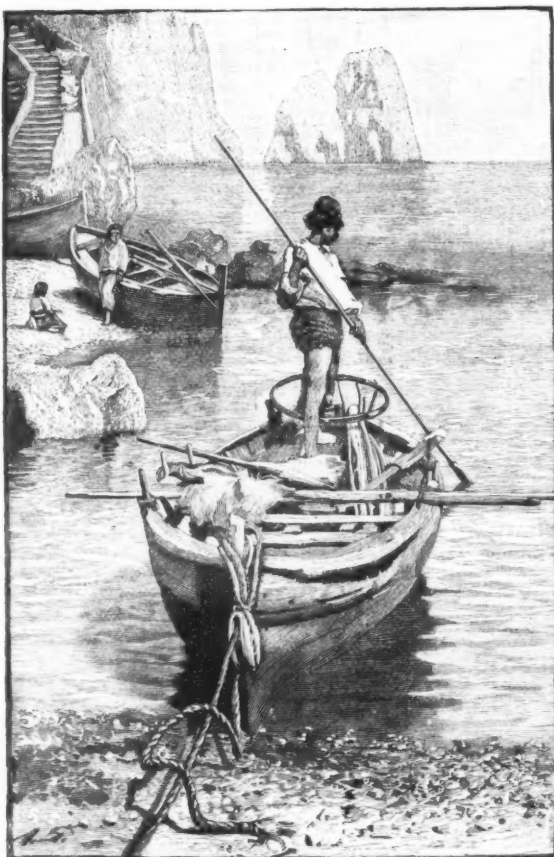
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